



NUTRITION: Beverage Recommendations



Best Practice Standards

- Serve whole milk to 12 - 24 month olds who are not on human milk, or serve reduced-fat milk to those at risk for hypercholesterolemia or obesity
- Serve fat-free (skim) or 1% milk to 2 years or older
- Only 100% juice, no added sweeteners
- Offer juice (100%) only during meals
- No more than 4-6 oz juice/day for 1-6 year olds; No more than 8-12 oz juice/day for 7-12 year olds
- Water available outside and inside
- Avoid sugar, including concentrated sweets (candy, sodas, sweetened drinks, fruit nectars, flavored milk)
- Serve no fruit juice to children younger than 12 months

Water

- When your preschooler is thirsty, water is a good beverage choice. It provides the fluid your child's body needs.
- Be sure to have water available when your child is playing outdoors or doing other physical activity.
- Make sure your preschooler drinks [fluoridated water](#). It helps build and maintain strong teeth. Many community tap water supplies contain fluoride. Check with your water supplier to make sure. If your water supply is not fluoridated or is from a well, check with your doctor about a possible need for fluoride supplements.
- Bottled water is not better or safer than regular tap water, and is an added expense.
- "Flavored" waters or "vitamin" waters may have added sweeteners. Be sure to read the [Nutrition Facts label](#) on these beverages.

Milk

- Milk and milk products provide many vital nutrients that your preschooler needs for growth. Milk is a good choice to offer as a beverage at meals and snacks.
- While some children don't drink enough milk, others sometimes prefer to fill up on milk and avoid other important foods. Preschoolers need about 2 to 2 ½ cups from the [Dairy group](#) each day. Help your child get enough but not too much milk.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk. These have the same amounts of calcium, protein, and vitamin D as whole or 2% milk, but less saturated fat and calories.
- All types of fluid milk are typically fortified with vitamin D. Some yogurts are also fortified with vitamin D. Vitamin-D fortified products help build and maintain bones.
- Make sure you serve only [pasteurized \(not raw\) milk](#) to your preschooler.

100% Fruit Juice

- Fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits provide more fiber than juice. Offer them most often.
- Look for beverages that have 100% fruit juice on the label. 100% fruit juice can be a healthy part of a preschooler's beverage choices in small amounts.
- You may offer your preschooler up to ½ cup to ¾ cup (4-6 ounces) of 100% [fruit juice](#) per day.
- Sweetened beverages such as fruit punch and fruit drinks look like fruit juice, but may contain little or no fruit. These drinks, as well as some flavored waters, sweetened teas, and sports drinks, provide calories, but little or no nutrients.
- Make sure you serve only pasteurized juices to your preschooler.



<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/daily-food-plans/about-beverages.html>

June 2012

ShapingNJ, The State Partnership for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention

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